



Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds

The first and only Sikh Political Party in the UK



10 Years on...

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To work closely with each of the main political parties in the UK to promote relevant issues set out in the 8-point Sikh Agenda for the UK Government.

The main areas of work for the Sikh Federation (UK) are:

- ❖ To promote the Sikh religion, philosophy and way of life - working within the Sikh community and with local and national government;
- ❖ To promote sporting and educational activities as well as relevant cultural issues directly associated with the Sikh way of life;
- ❖ To campaign for human rights issues impacting on Sikhs in the UK and abroad - working with human rights groups, non-governmental organisations and politicians; and
- ❖ To argue the case for the Sikhs right to self-determination and lobbying politicians, the UK Government, official representatives of foreign governments in the UK, the European Parliament and at the United Nations for the establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State of Khalistan.

ABOUT US

The Sikh Federation (UK) is a non-governmental organisation and a pressure group often referred to as the first ever Sikh political party in the UK. The Federation is based on the 'miri-piri' principle, the Sikh principle that temporal and spiritual goals are indivisible.

The Sikh Federation (UK) was established in September 2003 with the aim of giving Sikhs a stronger political voice by taking an increasing interest in mainstream politics in the UK.

INFLUENCE OF THE SIKH FEDERATION (UK)

In the UK around 150 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations are either affiliated or support the work of the Federation. It is widely recognised and acknowledged within the Sikh community that the Federation is the leading Sikh pressure group that is able to command the support of Sikhs in large numbers on a range of campaigns.

All major political parties – Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, UKIP, Greens, Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru have in the last 10 years worked with and recognised the importance of the activities of the Federation. Leading non-Sikh organisations, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Liberty and Redress have all worked with the Federation. The mainstream media in the UK – BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Independent, The Times etc. have all covered the work of the Federation.



Given the international dimension to many campaigns the Federation has expanded its work across Europe and set up sister organisations and built extensive links with Sikh organisations across the globe e.g. Canada and USA. The overall aim has been to help other Sikhs in the Diaspora to link up and give Sikhs a stronger political voice and direction.

To mark the 10th anniversary the Federation will be launching a worldwide network of over 500 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations in the UK, Europe and other parts of the globe. Those in the network will receive regular information via email about events and activities organised by the Federation – this includes conferences, campaigns, consultations and lobbies; meetings with UK government departments, representatives of other governments, European institutions and UN bodies.

CONTACT US: The Sikh Federation (UK) is a volunteer based organisation. Our members come from a range of backgrounds. Given the number of wide ranging projects and challenges ahead, we are keen to attract professionals and welcome additional volunteers. Key skills and sector knowledge are needed in local & central government, politics & lobbying, human rights, PR & media and web & social media.

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BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE IN THE UK AND ABROAD

Sikh lobbying in the UK Parliament – Sikh lobbying as we understand it today really first started in March 2001. The controversial proposals to ban two Sikh organisations



following pressure from the Indian authorities alongside 19 other organisations under anti-terror legislation was a wake-up call for a vocal element of the law-abiding British Sikh community.

Sikhs from different towns took it in turns on a daily basis to lobby MPs in the lead up to the debate in the House of Commons on 13 March 2001 with a mass Sikh lobby on the day of the debate. A lobby of the House of Lords followed on 27 March 2001. The success of this first lobby is reflected in the written record of the debates in the Commons and Lords and was a turning point in Sikh engagement with UK politicians.



Sikh lobby days, which on average happen twice a year, are now accepted and acknowledged by MPs as some of the most successful lobbies given the visible Sikh identity and gets politicians talking to each other and asking: *Why are the Sikhs here today?*

Sikh lobbying and protest rallies at the European level and at the United Nations - Lobbies and protest rallies have not been confined to the UK Parliament. The Sikh Federation (UK) has organised a protest rally outside the Welsh Assembly, several lobbies in the European Parliament in Brussels as well as protest rallies outside it to raise awareness, meetings with the European Commission, demonstrations and meetings at the United Nations in Geneva and this year the first ever conference on human rights in the European Parliament.

Early Day Motions, Parliamentary Questions, Adjournment Debates – Since the Sikh Federation (UK) started lobbying there have been over 40 Early Day Motions, hundreds of Parliamentary Questions and at least half a dozen debates in the UK Parliament relating to the Sikh community. These have increased the profile of the Sikhs and the issues that concern them with Parliamentarians, Government and officials.

Engagement at the highest levels with the mainstream political parties - In the last 10 years the Sikh Federation (UK) has had meetings with the party leaders of the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, UKIP, Greens, Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. In the last 12 months alone private meetings have taken place with three of these party leaders,



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alliances established and joint activities agreed in the run up to the next General Election in 2015. In the past decade the Sikh Federation (UK) has had meetings with numerous Ministers that currently attend Cabinet including the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. David Cameron; Deputy Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg; Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. Theresa May; Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith; Rt. Hon. Vince Cable; Rt. Hon. Oliver Letwin; Rt. Hon. Ed Davey; Rt. Hon. Baroness Warsi and Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve. This gives an indication of the depth of political relationships the Sikh Federation (UK) has developed over the years.



Setting up the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs – The Sikh Federation (UK) has been independently acknowledged as the organisation responsible



for setting up the APPG for British Sikhs in July 2005. The APPG's first chair Rob Marris, the former MP for Wolverhampton South West, is widely recognised throughout

the British Sikh community as someone who did an outstanding job.

Since 2010 the APPG has been chaired by Fabian Hamilton the MP for Leeds North East and it has attracted new members from across the political spectrum and can command support from around 150 MPs.

Sikh political activism in Canada and the USA - Over the last 10 years the Sikh Federation (UK) has worked with Sikh organisations in Canada and the United States where there are a similar number of Sikhs as in the UK to encourage them to become much more politically active.



The Sikh Federation (UK) was delighted to be invited in April this year to the launch of the first Sikh-American Congressional Caucus in Washington DC to represent the interests of the American Sikh community in the US Congress. This move has attracted considerable opposition in the pro-Indian media suggesting it was a move that was long overdue.

In Canada we have also seen considerable developments in Sikh political activism that culminated last November with Stephen Harper, the Canadian Prime Minister, to come out in support of the Sikh right to campaign for a Sikh homeland when pushed in Bangalore on the last day of his 6-day visit.

Senior politicians in many countries, such as the UK, Canada, USA and Australia, increasingly understand the need to rebut India on Sikh activism as there is nothing wrong with Sikhs peacefully campaigning in these countries for a Sikh homeland as the Federation has done for the last 10 years.

DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY

The Sikh identity is reasonably well protected in the UK. However, with an increasing number of practicing Sikhs, particularly younger Sikhs, the post 9/11 impact and the increase in secular extremism greater challenges have resulted. The Sikh Agenda for the UK Government launched in September 2001 was timely given the 9/11 attack in the USA and the rise of what has become popularly known as 'mistaken identity'.

In the last 10 years a number of successful high profile battles concerning the right to wear the Kara in school, the right to



wear the Kirpan at sporting venues and in the European Parliament and for respect for the Sikh turban (dastar) at airports have been effectively fought and won. We have seen the Equalities and Human Rights

Commission issue guidance to public bodies on the 5Ks and the Sikh turban. We have also seen active Sikh engagement with the Census 2011 compared to 10 years earlier.

Right to wear the Kara in school – The family of the 14-year old South Wales Sikh school girl, Sarika Singh, was referred to the Sikh Federation (UK). Liberty who take on very few cases, approached the Sikh Federation (UK) offering to take up the legal battle and manage the media. Liberty appreciated that Sikhs were in a better position to demonstrate discrimination than other faiths, most notably Christians (cross) and Muslims (head scarf) who had failed to convince British courts.

The Sikh Federation (UK) handled the political lobbying and related media enquiries and worked with Liberty and the family in the campaign that resulted in the High Court ruling in favour of the right for Sikh school children to wear the Kara. Initially Ann Clywd the local MP was unwilling to support the girl and her family, but the Federation arranged for MPs like Rob Marris and John Spellar to convince her that the Sikhs were serious and would take the matter to the European Court of Human Rights if necessary and prove that the actions of the school were illegal.

The mistake by the school and its governing body cost the school around £250k for fighting and losing the case. The publicity surrounding the case and the High Court ruling sent a message to schools throughout Britain that they must not stop Sikh school children from wearing their Karas at school.

Right to wear the Kirpan at sporting venues and the European Parliament – Following 9/11 Amritdhari (practising) Sikhs have experienced greater difficulties in wearing the



Kirpan. Whilst the right to enter certain government buildings wearing the Kirpan has largely been achieved problems remain with specific tourist attractions. There have however been some notable successes.



Prior to the London Olympics 2012 Sikhs successfully negotiated the right to enter Olympic venues wearing their Kirpans. In the run up to the Olympics some journalists in the mainstream media (bizarrely many of Indian origin) ridiculed this decision from a security perspective. However to the credit

of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and Lord Sebastian Coe they honoured the written assurances to the Sikh Federation (UK) despite the scaremongering in the tabloid press.

Other successes included the Lords Cricket Ground reversing its ban on spectators wearing the Kirpan after sensitive ITV news coverage of the unreasonableness of the ban. In January this year the Sikh Federation (UK) after years of campaigning successfully persuaded the European Parliament to allow Amritdhari (practising) Sikhs to enter in large numbers wearing their Kirpans i.e. the first human rights conference in June 2013.

Guidance to public bodies on the 5Ks and the Sikh turban – Given an increase in the number of Sikhs experiencing difficulties in wearing the Kirpan and Kara in government



buildings e.g. schools, hospitals etc. and occasionally also the Sikh turban in employment the Equalities and Human Rights Commission was persuaded to issue guidance on the 5Ks and the Sikh turban. This has

proved helpful, but the demand for a Statutory Code of Practice remains a realistic objective in the medium term.

Census 2011 – Prior to the approval of the Census 2011 questionnaire by Parliament the Sikh Federation (UK) took the unprecedented step to challenge the UK Government and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by issuing a pre-action letter to commence judicial review proceedings for the non-inclusion of a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs. This resulted in a number of important written admissions by the UK Government on the arguments put forward on behalf of the Sikh community.



This action and associated mainstream media coverage resulted in many Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations raising the importance of the Census compared to 10 years earlier and encouraging Sikhs to register their protest by answering the ethnic question by ticking 'Other' and writing in 'Sikh'. In the Census 2001 around 11,000 Sikhs registered their protest. The equivalent numbers have yet to be released by the ONS for the Census 2011, but are expected to have increased several-fold and strengthen the need for a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs. This achievement would ultimately mean 40,000 public bodies (schools, hospitals, local authorities and central government bodies) would need to automatically monitor if they provide a fair share of public services to Sikhs.

RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

June Remembrance March and Freedom Rally - 10 years ago when the Sikh Federation (UK) was set up the annual June Remembrance event needed a radically different approach to attract larger numbers, including a better conclusion and greater impact in raising awareness to show ***Sikhs will Never Forget 1984***. The Federation first trialed the use of Trafalgar Square in November 2005 when the Federation's youth wing - Young Sikhs (UK) put on 'Sikhs in the Square' with mainly English speakers - most being young women. This was a huge success and resulted in the use of Trafalgar Square in June for the Freedom Rally (mainly with English speakers) following the Remembrance March from Hyde Park.



Numbers taking part in the 25th anniversary before any Sikh TV channels started operating were very large. Promotion by Sikh TV channels combined with the attraction of a large TV screen in Trafalgar Square has resulted in numbers continuing to increase. In the last two years some in the Sikh media have chosen to considerably cut back on advertising the event, but Sikhs have nonetheless turned up in larger numbers than ever before. In 2012 the police confirmed numbers increased by 30% and the management team of Trafalgar Square confirmed this was by far the largest ever rally held by any group in the Square and the largest gathering since 1984. This year the police said numbers were up again by around 15% although many obstacles, including pressure by India on the authorities in the UK meant the start point, route and end point were far from ideal and agreed very late.

Early indications are that the response from the Sikh community for the 30th anniversary in June 2014 will be massive. Sikhs across the globe, including those in Punjab, the rest of Europe, Canada and the USA are amazed Sikhs in the UK turn up on such a huge scale year after year.

No justice for Sikhs in India for 1984 and subsequent human rights violations

– The last 30 years have shown that the Indian judicial system is incapable of delivering justice to the thousands of innocent Sikhs killed in 1984 and for the victims of human rights abuses that continue to the present date. It is virtually impossible to successfully prosecute Indian politicians and police officers responsible for the killing and torture of Sikhs when they visit the UK.



The aim of working with Human Rights Watch and Redress has therefore been to raise awareness and pressure the UK authorities to prevent visas from being issued to those who in the words of Ministers may 'present a safety or security risk or where their presence in the UK would not be conducive to the public good; or if there is independent, reliable and credible evidence that they have committed human rights abuses.'

The Federation working with MPs, most notably Rob Marris,

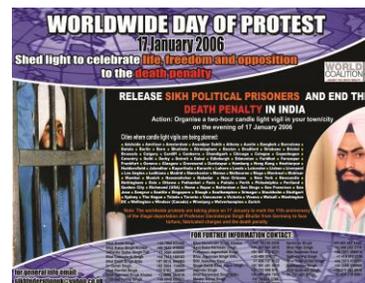
first prevented Jagdish Tytler from accompanying the Indian President to visit the Queen at Buckingham Palace in October 2009 for the start of the baton relay in preparation for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010. Last year Jagdish Tytler then challenged British Sikhs on television to stop him coming to London for the Olympics as he planned to lead the Indian Olympic team as vice-president of the Indian Olympic Association. Jagdish Tytler was made to eat his own words as he was prevented along with KPS Gill from attending the London Olympics 2012 because of Sikh pressure on the UK Government.



Kamal Nath as a serving Minister on official government business has been granted visas, but on two separate occasions the Federation have caused him maximum embarrassment by organising protests highlighting his role in the genocide of Sikhs in November 1984 and preventing him speaking at high profile events in central London. The actions of Sikhs in the UK has resulted in opposition to Kamal Nath in other countries where he has visited e.g. Belgium, Canada, USA and Switzerland. More recently it has resulted in US-based Sikhs For Justice serving court papers to Kamal Nath, Parkash Singh Badal, Sukhbir Singh Badal and Sonia Gandhi. The probability of successful prosecution and justice is very remote, but the negative publicity and the fear of traveling abroad is raising considerable awareness about the crimes that have been committed against Sikhs.

Seeking the release of Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar

– The Sikh Federation (UK) has been campaigning for Professor Bhullar and other Sikh political prisoners since first coming into



existence. The Federation launched the international campaign for justice for Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar more than 10 years ago. Protests outside the German Embassy and British Foreign Office and meetings with the German

Ambassador first took place in January 2003. A postcard campaign by the Federation's human rights wing, Khalsa Human Rights, resulted in every UK MP being sent details of Professor Bhullar's situation.

Lawyers and activists in Punjab acting for Professor Bhullar as well as his family members have confirmed it was the actions of the Federation and sister organisations in countries like Canada, USA and Australia that have created wider pressure on Sikhs in India to take up Professor Bhullar's case and keep it alive. The Federation has at periodic intervals worked with the Amnesty International Secretariat based in London – those who deal with India and the death penalty - to issue several Urgent Action appeals on behalf of Professor Bhullar with the latest appeal in August 2013. Meetings with staff at the European Commission dealing with India and lobbying MEPs at the European Parliament have also resulted in considerable pressure on India from the highest levels in the EU.

DONATE NOW

For monetary donations to support any of the initiatives please note the following bank details:

HSBC: Sikh Federation (UK) Account: 51692992 | Sort: 40-43-03